

What is a port?

A port is a small device that is put in under the skin surgically. These types of lines can stay in place for a long time. They have many uses. They may be used to:

- Give fluids.
- Give medicines.
- Give blood products.
- Give IV nutrition.
- Draw blood for lab tests
- Power CT scans

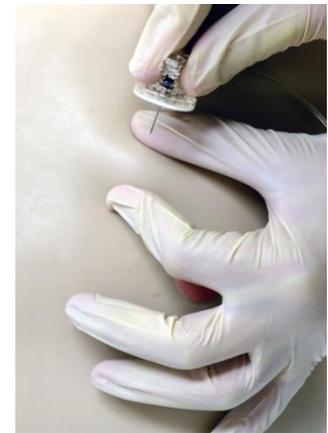


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How is it put in?

A specially trained provider puts in a port. It can be placed in the operating room or Interventional Radiology.

- The port is normally put in the upper chest, just below the clavicle or collar bone.
- An internal catheter or tube connects the port to a vein. You will see a small raised area under the skin where the port is placed.
- It is then attached to a long thin tube that is tunneled into a large vein through either the neck or upper chest.
- The line is moved through the vein until it reaches a large vein near the heart.
- The port is then sutured into the surrounding tissue. The retention sutures hold the port in one area which is often referred to as the pocket.



Possible problems

- There is a chance of getting an infection.
- If blood forms at the end of the internal catheter connected to the port. This makes the line hard to flush.
- Breakage of the internal parts such as the catheter or tube may occur. Surgery is required to replace the device.
- If medicine or fluids are running and the needle is moved out of place then the skin around the port can become swollen.

What to expect

- Your child's neck may be stiff and the chest may be sore for a few days after the surgery. The pain should go away in about 1 or 2 days.
- The chest may also look bruised. The bruising may take 1 to 2 weeks to go away.
- There will be a few stitches and steri-strips and a bandage over the area. A dissolvable stitch is often used. These do not need to be removed.

What care is needed?

- When the port is accessed a dressing will be put over the port and needle. The dressing holds the needle in place.
- The dressing and needle are changed weekly. They should also be changed if the dressing is loose, wet or soiled.
- Let your child's nurse know if you notice the dressing or needle should be changed.
- If the port is not used for a month, it will need to be accessed to give a medicine called heparin to maintain port. Most parents do not learn this skill, and this is done by either the clinic or home nurse.

How is the port removed?

The port can stay in place for several years. The port will need to be removed surgically in Interventional Radiology or the Operating room. After healing, there may be a very small scar on the skin.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.